1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

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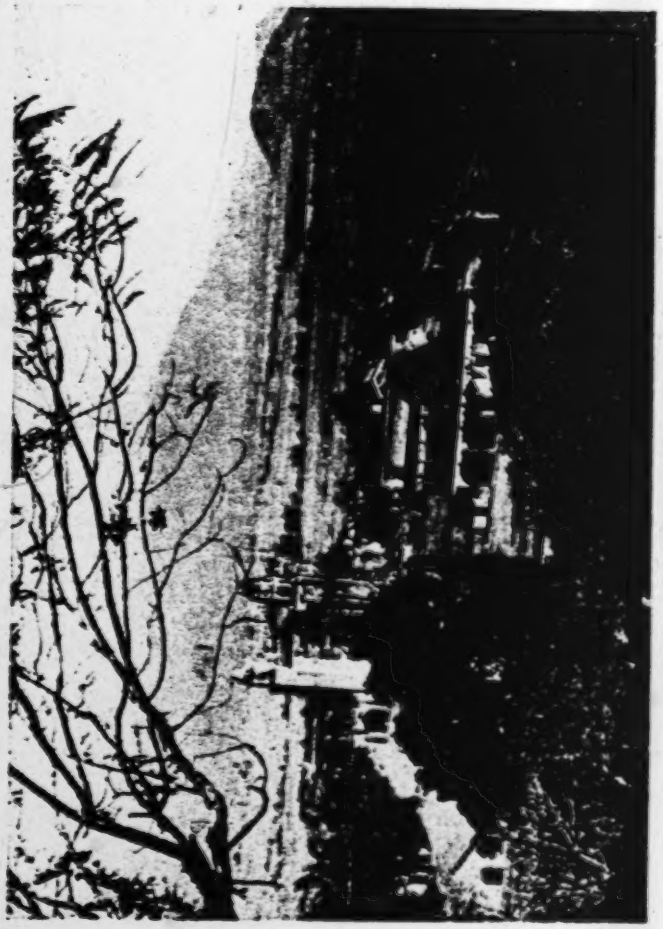

TEPOZTLAN: THE *PLAZA*

[facing page 21]

1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

center of a cluster of villages which is not four miles in radius but which includes a descent of about twenty-five hundred feet, from San Juanico at an altitude of seven thousand feet to Santiago at about forty-five hundred.[1] These villages rest upon the topmost steps of the stairway, and these steps are the steepest.

Tepoztlán lies at the focus of a parabola of mountains the northern arm of which is the last escarpment wall. The southern arm is a range of somewhat lower mountains. The parabola opens southeastward; from Tepoztlán at its head the land slopes swiftly down to the valley of Yautepec. Thus Tepoztlán is not visible from the escarpment edge, but is hidden behind this screen of mountains, although from certain points almost half the extent of the state can be seen.

Whether the village is approached from above or from below it remains hidden in large part until it is actually entered. A density of trees, most of which bear either edible fruits or showy flowers, conceals the houses, which are all flat roofed and one story in height. Only the churches are taller; here and there they pierce the foliage. The great central church (*templo mayor*) on the *plaza* is by far the largest building in Tepoztlán; its great walls, crenelated to serve as battlements, and its two tall bell-towers dominate a village that, in the rainy season, escapes into and is lost in foliage.

[1] The *plaza* at Tepoztlán is at an altitude of about 1,700 meters (5,500 ft.) above sea-level.

1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927)1930
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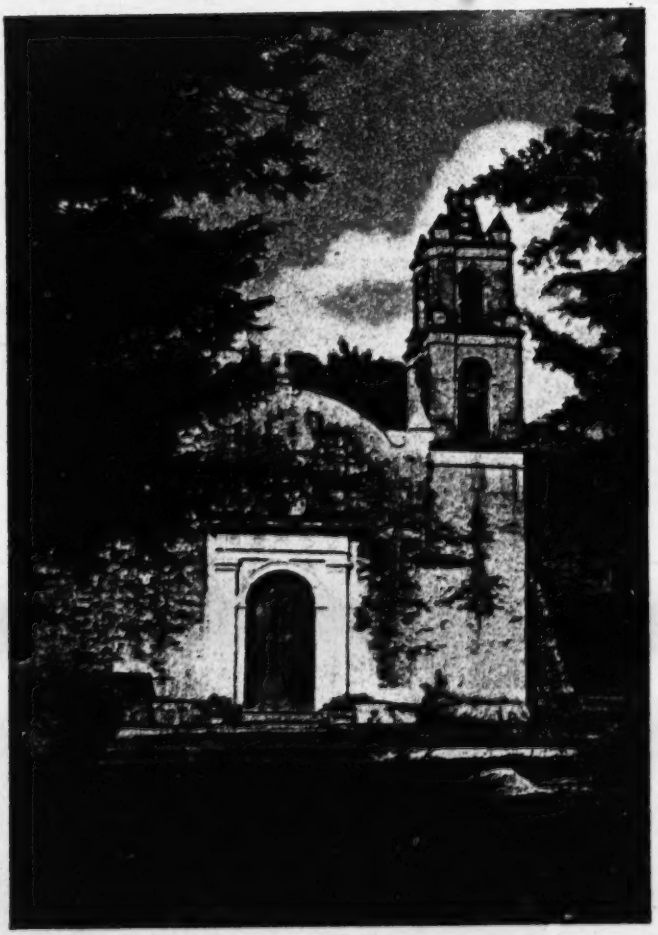

CHAPEL OF SAN SEBASTIAN

[facing page 69]

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CHAPTER IV

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE 621

The social organization of the village itself follows the same pattern as that just described for the entire valley community. Tepoztlán, like the whole community of which it is the largest village, is made up of [794] semi-independent units, each of which centers about a church and a patron saint. These units are the *barrios*. The *barrios* are the contiguous component parts of the village, but their presence and relative positions [346] are indicated by the towers of the seven small churches or chapels (*capillas*) which, with the great central church situated on the *plaza*, alone of the buildings of Tepoztlán, project above the sea of foliage which covers the town in the rainy season. These seven small chapels are scattered about the village; no two are close together. Each is located in and is 621 the property of one of the seven *barrios*. The chapel 778 and the *barrio* take their name from the saint whose 796 image is placed on the altar of the chapel and on 103 whose name day falls the *fiesta* of that *barrio*. Santa Cruz has not one, but two, *fiestas*—one on May 3, the other on August 6—because there are two images in the chapel, that of the Santa Cruz and that of San Salvador. In this case, while the *barrio* is known as Santa Cruz, Saint Salvador[1] is thought of as the pat- [776]

[1] "Saint Salvador"—rather than an aspect of the Christ.

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

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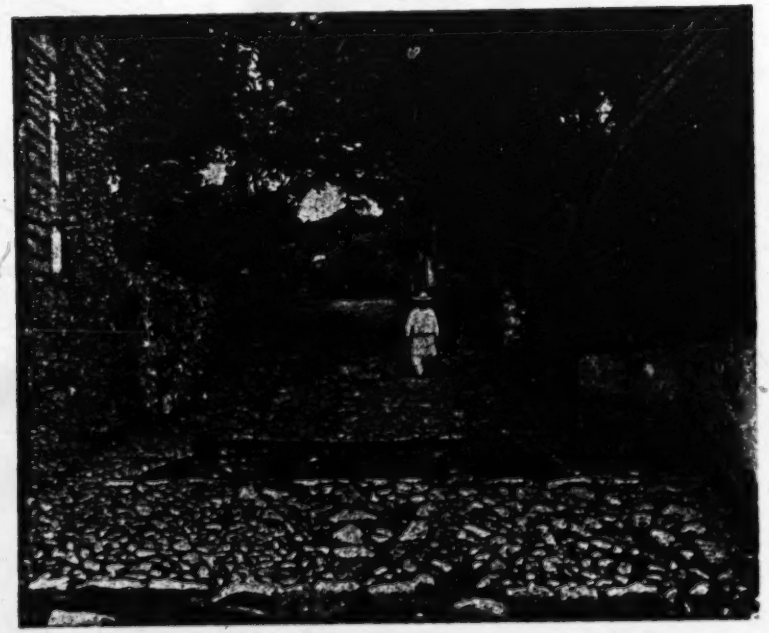

Fig. 9. Terrace street, Aztec style.

361 though the village contains 662 house sites, it does not have the compact or crowded appearance of some Mexican towns. For the most part, the houses are separated 351 from each other by gardens, patios, corrals, and sometimes milpas. These are enclosed by low-lying stone walls which do not block the view from the street and which permit overhanging trees to shade the street. Only a few houses in the center [342] are built contiguously in Spanish style and are enclosed by high, concealing walls.

361 Tepoztlán has the traditional square plaza around which are grouped the more [367] important public buildings. On one side of the plaza is the small public park, com- [363] plete with bandstand, shade trees, benches, and brick walks. The paved road, which [494] runs along the other side of the park, ends at this point, and here, too, is the last stop on the bus line.

[344] North of the park is the courthouse which houses the office of the president, secre- tary, and other local officials. A guard in soldier's uniform is frequently seen pacing [346] up and down before the steps. The new school house was built next to the court- house and is now one of the important edifices of the center. Between these two [347] buildings and the plaza itself is the Portales, a semi-enclosed street where most of the stores and permanent vending places are located. The street has a roof sup- [366] ported by columns and provides merchants and buyers protection from the sun and rain.

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

Fig. 10. A street, resembling a dried-out stream bed.

rain. To the east is the large cathedral and convent, the most imposing and handsome buildings in the village. The convent is now a historical monument and is visited by tourists. Between the cathedral and the plaza is a row of whitewashed, flat-roofed stores. West of the plaza is a dirt road leading to the lower part of the village, to the cemetery, and to the village of Ixcatepec and more stores. The mills and some of the finer old houses of former *caciques* are also located on the plaza.

This part of the village presents the appearance and some of the hustle and bustle of a town, but the streets off the center are uniformly quiet and rustic and stamp Tepoztlán as a rural village. (See Fig. 12.) But even the center does not give the impression of an active, thriving community. The park, plaza, and public buildings show evidence of chronic neglect. Only for the annual Carnaval is the area well swept and the main fountain cleaned. The park is seldom occupied by the native population and, except when there are tourists, usually looks abandoned.

The stores are small and dark and have unattractive displays. On market days the few vendors and the small variety of goods available betray little commercial activity and a general air of decline. (See Fig. 13.)

The streets just off the plaza bear names indicated by placards. As is customary in Mexico the street names commemorate important historical events and outstanding local figures. Thus in Tepoztlán we find such street names as The Fifth of May, Aniceto Villamar, and No Reelección.[8] Only those houses in the center are

[8] Some of the street names are in Náhuatl and refer to pre-Hispanic figures, for example, Avenida del Tepozteco and Netzahualcoyotl.

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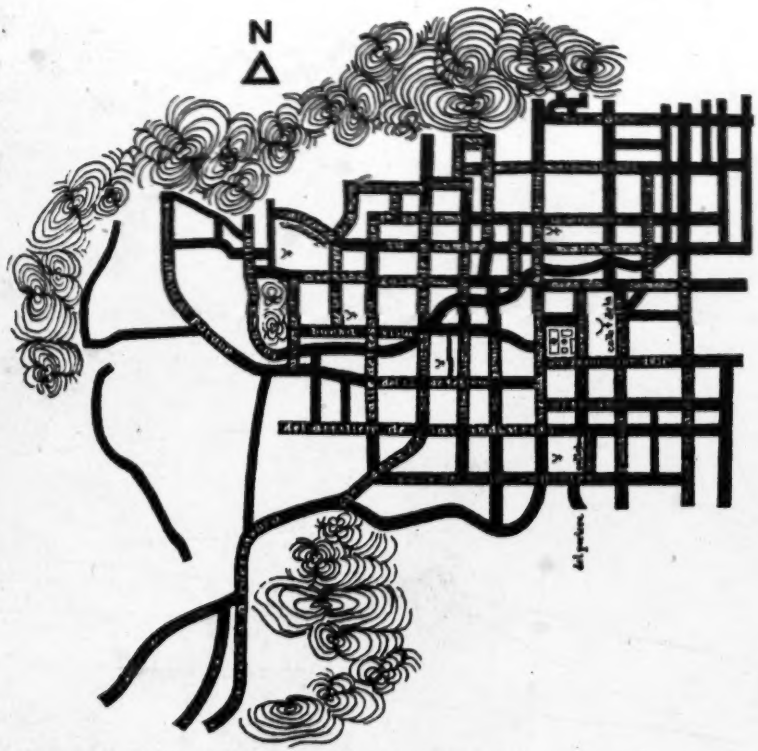

Fig. 11. Tepoztlán, showing streets, plaza, and barrio chapels.

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numbered, but not in any systematic manner. Street names and house numbers are not used by the local population nor do they appear on letters addressed to the villagers from the outside. Since mail remains in the post office until called for, this does not present a problem.

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At night the village appears even less sophisticated than during the day because of the lack of public street lighting. When there is no moon it is difficult, even dangerous, to walk through the rough streets without a flashlight or candle. Normally only young men venture out at night. Most people retire early, and the streets are dark and quiet. During the day the village also tends to be quiet, but many sounds can be heard: voices from within the houses, children crying or playing, housewives slapping tortillas into shape, people and animals walking over the stones, church bells, buses honking and racing loudly along the main thoroughfare, and an occasional lone peddler crying his wares. At night the only sounds

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2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

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Fig. 13. The market place, Tepoztlán.

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Fig. 14. Public fountain, Tepoztlán.

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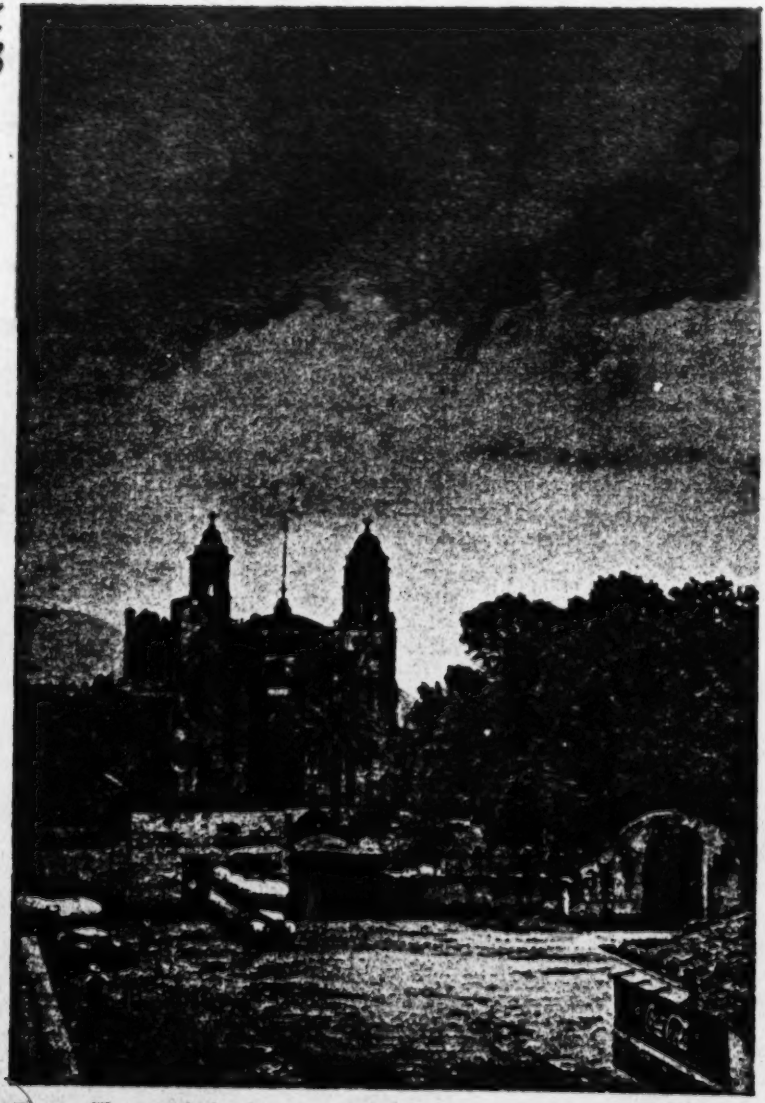

Fig. 50. The central church.

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

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Fig. 56. The central school, seen from inside the patio.

872 866 less fear of strangers than did older children entering the first grade without previous school experience. This attests to the importance of the socializing role of the school in Tepoztlán. Children in the two lowest groups, as well as in the second grade, are frequently too timid to ask to be taken to the toilet, with unfortunate results. In the second grade, for the most part, teachers note that the children are more self-confident and more mischievous. They still cry readily but for such reasons as not being able to do the work, being assigned to another group, or being sent to the blackboard.

In the third and fourth grades, teachers note that the children tend to be less respectful and more disobedient. But at the same time they seem to be more afraid of their parents than before and often, for fear of being scolded, fail to take home messages from school, asking for contributions, a new notebook, or a costume for a school function.

The pupils in the fifth and sixth grades are described as being the "most obedient and respectful and the most studious." These two grades usually have the best attendance records.

872 It is interesting to note that in the third and fourth grades, among the boys and girls of from nine to twelve years of age, there is voluntary segregation according

3:Lewis E-5 (1943-1957) 1960
NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

leading Mexican banker who wanted to build a home in the village negotiated for over a year before he succeeded in buying a modest-sized idle plot of land whose owner was living in Mexico City. By 1956, Tepoztecans had sold almost forty plots to as many outsiders for building homes in the village and in the lovely valley below. Tepoztecan middlemen are now speculating in land because of the steadily rising prices. A village site valued at about 50 centavos per square meter in 1943 sold in 1957 for as much as 12 pesos a meter (100 centavos to the peso).

Tepoztlán has become an international tourist colony. The non-Tepoztecan home owners now include native Mexicans, naturalized Mexican citizens of Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Japanese, and Italian ancestry, and a few Americans. Few of these people live in the village the year around but spend their holidays and vacations there. The construction of thirty-five new homes for the foreign colony has given employment to some Tepoztecan masons and day laborers. Some of the building materials—stone, sand, and tiles—also have been purchased locally. A number of the families have taken Tepoztecan girls as domestic servants both in the village and in their Mexico City or United States homes, and about a dozen Tepoztecans have jobs as caretakers. The colony also provides some additional income to local meat and milk dealers and other merchants. On the whole, the "foreigners" form few friendships in the village and except for the *Carnaval* participate very little in village affairs. It is said that most of the outsiders opposed the campaign to bring electricity to Tepoztlán for fear that it might spoil the primitive rustic quality of the village. It should be noted that among the non-Tepoztecans who have lived in the village are some of Mexico's leading intellectuals and artists and a few doctors. Some of these men have taken a great interest in the villagers and have helped them in their efforts to build a new high school, to obtain city water, and most recently (June 1958) to procure electricity.

Other forms of tourism have also grown rapidly and tourist facilities have improved. Most important has been the conversion of the banker's private home into one of the most charming resorts in Mexico, the *Posada del Tepozteco*. Since the late forties, Mexican and Hollywood movie producers have used Tepoztlán as the setting for a number of movies.

Since 1943, educational facilities have been expanded in the village. Two new schools built in the larger barrios gave the village a total of four elementary schools. Attendance rose from about 750 in 1950 to over 900 in 1956. In 1950, a high school was completed, and attendance rose from 54 in the first year to 110 in 1956. Boys still predominate over girls in both elementary and high schools. The surrounding villages have begun to reach out for higher education and now send their children to the central high school in Tepoztlán. Each year a number of Tepoztecan high-school graduates go on to the university in Mexico City.

In the past ten years bus travel to Cuernavaca has almost doubled and travel to Mexico City also has increased. On an average week day approximately 500 Tepoztecans take the bus to Cuernavaca to work, shop, study, sell produce, and to find recreation. Some of the peasants now think it worthwhile to take the bus to their *milpas*, a distance of two or three kilometers, rather